

I had a rough idea I was hovering around 35,000 to 36,000 pounds. The maximum arrestment weight for the Hornet is 34,000 pounds. As I turned to set up at that “six-mile” straight-in point, I started to dump fuel. The Hornet dumps between 600 to 1,000 pounds a minute, so I turned the dumps on and timed for two minutes. I was close to the three-mile mark when CAG paddles called, “Paddles contact.” It was time to focus on landing.

While I adjusted my fuel, I thought of several things: “What if I bolter?” “What if I go into mech before I land?” “I wonder what it’s going to feel like if I have to punch out?” As these thoughts ran rampant through my mind, I told myself, “Just fall back on your training, and you’ll do just fine—I hope.”

At two miles, I trimmed the jet to what I thought was on-speed; I didn’t have any indications in the cockpit. I trimmed the jet to 145 knots, on-speed for the Hornet, and continued to scan my standby instruments. I scanned airspeed, altitude, then lineup. Finally, at a mile and a half, CAG paddles lip-locked me, and, after several informative calls, he talked me down for the uneventful day trap. That trap was one I never will forget. Had I not trapped, I might have found out the answer to one of my questions.

In closing, from one LSO to another, “Thanks paddles, I owe you one.”✈️

Lt. Kneeland flies with VFA-25.



Re: “Wet and Wild in San Diego Bay” (April 2003)

As a rescue swimmer and SAR petty officer in my unit in San Diego, I am concerned about the search-and-rescue story “Wet and Wild in San Diego Bay,” in the April 2003 *Approach*. The events in this story are more wrong than the pilot explained.

He did not seem to be concerned with the fact they were training with “*for training use only*” gear. All the gear from aviation physiology in Miramar, San Diego, is not suitable for flight. In the article, the individuals were free-floating, in an ocean environment, in training gear. What concerns me even more is that the pilot states he was hoisted “up to the cabin” via litter. OPNAVINST 3130.6C limits live hoisting for

training to a height above the water of no more than 10 feet. The litter then will be lowered back to the water, and the survivor released. The poor proficiency of the rescue swimmer (rigging the litter so it flipped over) explains why we have those rules. The possibility of drowning someone is very real—that’s why we have pool training.

I’m writing because I do not want other Navy SAR units to get the impression it’s OK to wear training gear for actual evolutions and to do full live hoists by litter as part of a mishap drill. It is not.

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